

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



October 24, 1997

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE I-68-97

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY WELFARE-TO-WORK  
PROGRAM COORDINATORS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- ☐ State Law Change
- ☐ Federal Law or Regulation Change
- ☐ Court Order or Settlement Agreement
- ☐ Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- ☒ Initiated by CDSS

SUBJECT: EMPLOYMENT READINESS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

The purpose of this letter is to invite counties to submit a proposal for the Employment Readiness Demonstration Project (ERDP). The ERDP is a three-year demonstration project to assist California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) recipients with multiple barriers to obtaining and maintaining entry-level jobs to achieve self-sufficiency through obtaining unsubsidized employment. Services are targeted toward these individuals due to their need for intensive and specialized employment services, such as supported work training, as well as the need for specialized supportive services for substance abuse treatment, mental health, domestic violence problems, and short-term vocational training. The demonstration project will test the effectiveness of the ERDP model in placing recipients with multiple barriers in unsubsidized employment or other work activities; investigate the value of utilizing the ERDP services to serve this population; and identify the impact of these services on adults, children and families of intensive participation in welfare-to-work programs by CalWORKs recipients with multiple barriers.

The ERDP will involve up to six counties in the demonstration project. Enclosed with this letter is a description of the project, which was developed in cooperation with county representatives from the County Welfare Director's Association (CWDA). While the research component of the ERDP requires a singular model in order to evaluate the model, counties will have flexibility in the design of the services to be offered. Counties interested in participating in the ERDP will need to submit a proposal that identifies how the county intends to implement the model. The proposal must include county-specific information in response to the program elements in Section III of the attachment. In addition, the county must submit a Budget Narrative, also attached, identifying the project costs for Fiscal Years (FYs) 1997/98 and 1998/99. These costs should reflect that services in the ERDP begin no earlier than January 1998.

Counties may implement the project through the use of a vendor that would provide the services or through use of county staff. If counties are interested in the use of a vendor to provide the ERDP services, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is willing to work with counties to determine if it would be more administratively effective and efficient for CDSS to contract directly with the vendor. Should this process be preferable and more expeditious, the county would be considered a third party to the contract. If this is not possible, a memorandum of understanding would be developed between the vendor, CDSS, and the welfare department that would specify respective roles and responsibilities.

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE

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Pursuant to Budget Act language, the CDSS is required to evaluate the ERDP to determine whether the ERDP model is effective in placing individuals with multiple barriers in employment or other work activities. The evaluation will include outcome measures including the number of clients who are able to find employment as a result of participation in the project, the extent of any such employment, whether any clients were no longer dependent on public assistance or were dependent upon a reduced level of public assistance as a result of the project.

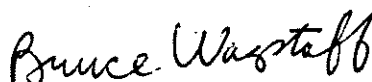
Total funding for the demonstration project is anticipated at \$8.6 million over a three-year period. The budget for FY 1997/98 is \$1.1 million. The Department intends to seek the appropriate level of funding for this demonstration project in subsequent years. The project implementation date is targeted for January 1, 1998.

Those counties interested in participating in the demonstration project should submit their proposals no later than November 20, 1997 to:

CDSS  
Employment Programs Bureau  
744 P Street, MS 6-138  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Attn: Stan Cagle

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Karen Kennedy, Manager, Employment Programs Policy Unit at (916) 657-3400.

Sincerely,



BRUCE WAGSTAFF  
Deputy Director  
Welfare to Work Division

Enclosure

c: CWDA

# **EMPLOYMENT READINESS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

Prepared by

Employment Programs Bureau  
Welfare-To-Work Division  
California Department of Social Services

October 23, 1997

## EMPLOYMENT READINESS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

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# EMPLOYMENT READINESS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Employment Readiness Demonstration Project (ERDP) is to provide services to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program recipients, who have been determined to have circumstances which make it extremely difficult for them to secure and maintain an entry-level job. The ERDP seeks to achieve the following objectives: to discourage long-term welfare dependency and foster self-sufficiency; to enable individuals to participate in the welfare-to-work program who may not have been required to participate due to physical, mental, substance abuse, or domestic violence problems; and, to enable the participants to receive the support and services necessary to obtain employment.

## II. BACKGROUND

The recent enactment of Assembly Bill (AB) 1542 (Chapter 270, Statutes of 1997) has substantially changed California's benefit assistance program and has eliminated the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. The new program, CalWORKs, has a goal of assisting recipients to obtain employment and achieve self-sufficiency through imposition of time limits on aid, limited exemptions from work requirements, and a focus on personal responsibility and accountability. Under CalWORKs, there is no longer an exemption or a deferral from participation for those individuals who are seriously dependent on alcohol or drugs, or have emotional or mental problems as there had been in the GAIN program. Since the new law does not provide these exemptions or deferrals, and has placed more stringent requirements by which individuals with disabilities may be exempt, it is important that California actively pursue a model of service delivery for this population. This is especially important since there has been little experience in determining the services needed for this group to become employable. Therefore, this model is being tested for this population who under the new law may not be exempt.

## III. EVALUATION (Objectives)

1. To determine the effectiveness of this model in placing individuals with multiple barriers in unsubsidized employment or other work activities for the minimum number of hours per week in accordance with CalWORKs.
2. To investigate the value of utilizing this service model in order to assist individuals with multiple barriers.
3. Identify the overall impacts on families relative to intensive participation in welfare-to-work activities.

## **Sample design of the target population**

The population size for this project will be between 1,200 to 1,400 participants who will be drawn from up to six county sites. These county sites may be comprised of a cluster of counties. For research purposes, the sample population will only be drawn from CalWORKs Family Group (FG) Assistance Units that are not participating in the GAIN program. The target population will be defined using the following criteria:

- **Level I (Identification of Long Term/No Work recipient population)**

Time on aid with no work history - The minimum time on aid will be four years. CDSS will generate a computerized statistical match to identify potential participants. Analysis of the CalWORKs population clearly indicates that long-term adult recipients are substantially more challenged in becoming self-sufficient. The absence of recent work history is a statistically significant factor in identifying recipients who have greater difficulty in finding and keeping jobs. The Level I statistical screening is intended to significantly reduce the cost of identifying the ERDP target population.

- **Level II (Preliminary screening for At-Risk status)**

Recipients meeting the first criteria will be screened for one or more primary factors listed below. This screening process will involve a brief telephone or site interview performed by county welfare department staff. This screening process will enable the counties to reduce and further identify the target population.

- **Level III (final screening)**

In order to maintain program consistency, standardized assessment tools and staff qualifications will be developed and utilized for defining and assessing the eligible population. These standardized assessment tools shall be developed in cooperation with the state and the selected counties. Individuals determined to be potential participants will receive a detailed assessment which will be performed by county or vendor staff who have been trained in the use of the assessment tool. The actual target population will be identified once the detailed assessment has been completed. To identify the target population, the participants will be assessed for the following:

- The individual's need for substance abuse services that prevent the individual from obtaining employment;
- The individual's need for mental health services that prevent the individual from obtaining employment;
- Any physical disability that prevents the individual from obtaining employment;
- Domestic violence issues that prevent the individual from obtaining employment;
- The individual's need for specialized services due to low cognitive developmental skill level; and
- The individual's needs to remain at home to care for a disabled child.

In addition, we recognize that other factors, that in themselves would not necessarily be considered barriers to employment, must also be addressed. The following is a sample of those complicating factors:

- Non-English speaking;
- Homeless;
- Low educational attainment;
- No family support network; and/or
- Ex-felon.

The final research design will be determined in collaboration with the state, the selected research firm, and the project counties.

Counties and any contracting agencies participating in this project are required to be available to meet at an agreed-upon site for cooperative development of the qualifications for the assessors, the assessment tool, and the research design.

- **Level IV (Random Assignment)**

Individuals determined to have multiple barriers as identified by the previous three levels of screening will be randomly assigned to one of two groups. "Treatment group" program participants will receive the ERDP services, and the "Tracking group" participants will receive services as may be available.

#### IV. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The goal of the ERDP is to assist recipients with multiple barriers to achieve self-sufficiency through unsubsidized employment. The ERDP will test and evaluate an alternative approach to address the needs of CalWORKs recipients who are over the age of 18, who have minimal or no previous attachment to the labor force, and who have multiple barriers which inhibit their ability to obtain and/or retain unsubsidized employment. Services are targeted toward these individuals due to their need for intensive and specialized employment services, such as supported work training as well as specialized supportive services including treatment for substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence problems, and short-term vocational training.

The ERDP will provide the following services to participants:

##### **Orientation**

During orientation, treatment group participants will be informed about the ERDP services and requirements, such as mandatory participation, including sanctions for non-cooperation. Orientation may be performed by the county, the contracting agency, or can be conducted jointly by the county and contracting agency.

## **Assessment**

Assessments may be performed by the county or the contracting agency. Each participant will be assigned a case manager and will receive a comprehensive assessment which will result in the identification of employment barriers and an individualized welfare-to-work plan, developed by both the recipient and the agency staff. At a minimum, the agency or county will assess the following:

- The participant's work history, including employment skills, knowledge, and ability;
- The participant's educational history and present educational competency level;
- The participant's need for supportive services in order to maximize benefits from the employment and training services;
- Identification of intensive and specialized employment needs, the skills to be attained, and the resources available to obtain employment; and
- Referral to appropriate services for any other barriers to employment, including domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health problems, or a learning disability.

## **Drug testing**

If the type of employment the participant is attempting to obtain requires a drug test as a condition of hire, the contracting agency may require the participant to undergo a drug test.

In addition, when it is suspected that the individual's failure to comply with the terms of the individual's participation plan is due, at least in part, to substance abuse, the county may require a participant to undergo a substance abuse assessment, pursuant to a protocol developed by the state and the participating counties to determine the most appropriate type of assessment. Based on this assessment, participants for whom substance abuse problems preclude or inhibit participation may be required to attend treatment. The participants will be referred to a treatment facility which must be licensed, certified, or operating under a contract with the state or county. The county or agency will continue to monitor the participant's progress while in treatment. Upon successfully completing treatment the agency shall re-enter the participant in the appropriate service component of the program.

## **Service strategies**

The following services, and the order in which they will be utilized, will be determined at the assessment on an individual basis. It is anticipated that the average length of time that a participant will be in the program is 12 months; the maximum will be 24 months. In addition, participants may receive post-employment services for at least 90 days, but no longer than the first 12 months of employment.



## **Work Experience or Supported Work**

The work experience or supported work component will consist of concurrent enrollment in work experience or supported work and the necessary supportive services. In order to meet the minimum work requirements, each participant shall participate in welfare-to-work activities for 20 hours each week beginning January 1, 1998, 26 hours each week beginning July 1, 1998, and 32 hours each week beginning July 1, 1999, and thereafter. A county retains the option to require all recipients or individual recipients to participate in welfare-to-work activities in excess of the minimum number of hours specified by federal law up to 32 hours each week.

Each participant will be assigned to at least 20 hours per week of work experience or supported work provided by the service provider and the remainder of hours up to a combined maximum of 32 hours per week to be made up by participating in the supportive services outlined in their individualized participation plan. At the option of the county, grant-based on-the-job training could be used in this component.

The work experience or supported work component will provide participants with a work environment characterized by intensive and close supervision/encouragement, a supportive peer environment, and individual counseling intended to develop:

- Positive work habits and attitudes;
- Work stamina necessary for competitive employment;
- Work-appropriate interpersonal relationships; and
- The ability to perform the quantity and quality of work necessary for competitive employment.

Additional services will further enhance the individual's ability to become self-sufficient. Participants will be required, as necessary, to participate in any of the following individual and/or group activities to address their barriers to employment:

- Vocational counseling;
- Career exploration/development;
- Job search;
- Parenting classes;
- Problem-solving skills;
- 12-step groups that address substance abuse problems;
- Anger management groups;
- Basic skills instruction;
- Mental health counseling;
- Domestic violence support groups;
- Other impairment skills instruction; and
- Other services necessary to obtain employment.

## **Supervised Job Search**

In this component, participants begin active supervised job search. Supervised job search is provided as part of work experience or supported work and will be likely to occur as participants near completion of work experience or supported work. Participants will be assigned to participate in job search for a period of up to four consecutive weeks. Job search activities may be required in excess of the four weeks on the basis of a review of the recipient's performance during job search by the county or vendor to determine whether extending the job search period would result in unsubsidized employment. Job search activities can be concurrent with any other component.

## **Short-Term Skills Training (up to 12 months)**

Participants who have been assessed as needing training in order to obtain employment and those individuals who have been successful in the employment with supports component will have the opportunity to participate in subsidized short-term skills training. In order to qualify for such services, participants must continue participating in their current activity for the minimum required number of hours while attending skills training. In no case should a participant be encouraged to reduce or quit their current activity or employment in order to attend skills training. In addition, the training must:

- Lead to earning either a license or a certificate; and
- Be in an occupation likely to lead to employment.

## **Unsubsidized employment**

Participants who complete their work experience or skills training will be expected to enter and retain unsubsidized employment. These participants will receive job search and placement assistance to help them obtain employment.

## **Post-Employment Services**

Post-Employment services may be provided up to 12 months after the first day of employment to the extent that the services are not available from other sources.

Those participants successfully obtaining employment will receive the following case management and supportive services:

- Development of job retention skills;
- Employer advocacy;
- On-site job training and problem solving skills;
- The development of work site based support from supervisors and co-workers;
- The development of community based support from family, friends, organizations, churches, etc.
- Child care, including transitional child care;

- Transportation costs;
- Ancillary expenses, which shall include the cost of books, tools, clothing, fees, and other necessary costs; and
- Personal counseling.

It is anticipated that these services will diminish over time, and with successful job retention.

Those participants who do not successfully obtain employment will continue participation in work experience to further develop employment-related skills and/or skills training. Participants will be required to continue participation in prescribed activities, if necessary, while attending work experience in order to meet the minimum work requirements.

### **Required County Actions and County Costs:**

Regardless of who the county selects as the service provider, the county will be responsible for performing conciliation and sanctions, case management (can be performed by the service provider or the county at county option), level III screening, and for reimbursing the following costs:

- Child care;
- Transportation;
- Ancillary expenses.

In addition, counties must meet the following conditions:

- Designate a single point of contact to work with the department to develop and implement the demonstration project. This staff person must be able to meet in Sacramento with CDSS staff and representatives from other counties to exchange ideas and work out details of the project. The travel expenses will be paid by the county.
- If the single point of contact responsibilities do not include the evaluation component of the ERDP, the county must also appoint a county coordinator who will fully cooperate with the evaluator and provide all data specified by the evaluator. The coordinator's salary and expenses will be paid by the county.
- Implement the demonstration project on 1/1/98 and guarantee continued participation for three years.
- Operate within current welfare-to-work and ERDP allocations covering all costs, including the coordinator's salary and travel expenses associated with a data collection.

- Have the ability to track or identify program participants and gather needed information.
- Provide all necessary data to CDSS for purposes of creating public use data sets.
- Provide monthly data to the evaluator no later than 30 days after the end of the month.
- Provide historical data at the case level on earned income and grants for the 12-month period prior to implementation and data for the life of the demonstration.

## V. **Criteria for County Selection**

When responding to the following questions, please be sure to briefly describe all points in both the Minimum Criteria and the Additional Criteria sections.

### **Minimum Criteria**

AFDC-FG adult population of at least 3,000.

Ability to serve a minimum of 150 clients with multiple barriers, as outlined in the model, phased-in over a two-year period.

### **Additional Criteria**

The factors by which proposals will be rated are as follows:

- Does it appear likely that the program services offered will result in employment, or placement in other work activities?
- Will the proposed project effectively coordinate with existing programs and avoid duplication of services?
- Is the staffing and administrative structure adequate to achieve the proposed results in a manner which is cost-effective?
- Does the service provider have a record of demonstrated effectiveness in providing training and employment services to recipients with multiple barriers to employment?
- When will the county/agency be able to begin serving this population?

Counties must provide a narrative addressing the following questions and concerns:

1. Are all the services (i.e., alcohol and drug treatment, mental health treatment, domestic violence services) already available in the proposed service area? If yes, include the names of agencies or organizations in the proposed service area which can provide these and/or related services to the target population; and the county's ability to refer individuals for service. Note potential delays if there are waiting lists for services.
2. Does the county intend to offer the services themselves or through the use of a vendor? If through a vendor, does the county want CDSS to provide the contract?
3. What groups or organizations will cooperate, or be involved, with the project? Describe the nature of their coordination or participation, describe procedures and criteria for their selection and provide evidence that they will cooperate in the project's development and implementation.
4. Provide a description of all services you plan to provide. What vocational skills training is available in the community?
5. What county or vendor staffing is required to implement this program? Include the number of staff (expressed as portions of full-time equivalents), staff duties and qualifications. Include job descriptions, and if staff is already employed, include the individuals' qualifications.
6. How many participants will be enrolled and served over the course of the program?
7. What percentage of participants do you project to place in unsubsidized employment and in supported employment? Include the number of participants the county and/or vendor has served and placed over the past twelve months.
8. What types of jobs will be available to program participants?
9. What will be the average hourly beginning wage of participants who are placed in jobs?
10. What will be the average annual cost per client?
11. Describe how you will assure the collection and timely provision of data for the evaluation.
12. Describe how you will work cooperatively with other counties and the state in the development of a uniform screening and assessment instrument.

**BUDGET SUMMARY**

|   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| BIDDER'S NAME                           | CONTACT PERSON                 |
| ADDRESS                                 | TELEPHONE NUMBER<br>(     )    |
| <b>BUDGET ITEM</b>                      | <b>AMOUNT BUDGET/REQUESTED</b> |
| PERSONNEL SERVICES                      |                                |
| Salary and Wages                        |                                |
| Benefits                                |                                |
| SUBTOTAL                                |                                |
| OPERATING/EQUIPMENT EXPENSES            |                                |
| Consultant Services                     |                                |
| Travel                                  |                                |
| Space                                   |                                |
| Equipment Rental                        |                                |
| Furniture Rental                        |                                |
| Consumable Supplies                     |                                |
| Printing                                |                                |
| Telephone                               |                                |
| Utilities                               |                                |
| Indirect Cost                           |                                |
| Other (Explain in Budget Narrative)     |                                |
| SUBTOTAL – Operating/Equipment Expenses |                                |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>               |                                |

## PERSONNEL BUDGET

|               |                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| BIDDER'S NAME | CONTACT PERSON               |
| ADDRESS       | TELEPHONE NUMBER<br>(      ) |

[illegible]

\* Enter the percent of time that budgeted staff will spend on this project.

## BUDGET NARRATIVE FORMAT

The following format may be used when completing the budget narrative. As an alternative, Bidders may submit narratives developed in-house. If the Bidder chooses to submit an in-house narrative, line items a through k must be costed where appropriate and must match totals quoted on Budget Summary.

### a. CONSULTANT SERVICES

Explanation:

1

a. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### b. TRAVEL

Local:

Out-of-Town:

b. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### c. SPACE COST

Rent:

Utilities:

Maintenance:

c. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### d. EQUIPMENT RENTAL

d. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Use of office equipment for \_\_\_\_\_ staff at \_\_\_\_\_/month.

### e. FURNITURE RENTAL

e. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Use of rental furniture for \_\_\_\_\_ staff at \_\_\_\_\_/month.



f. CONSUMABLE SUPPLIES:

Office Supplies:

Janitorial Supplies:

f. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

g. PRINTING

g. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

h. TELEPHONE

h. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

i. UTILITIES

Specify any utilities not covered under (c):

i. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

j. INDIRECT COSTS

j. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

k. OTHER

Specify items not included in any of the above:

k. Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_